

taken since, including by himself in 1992 and 1993. I therefore visited Roydon Common myself on 15 May 2000 to see if I could demonstrate its continuing presence and was delighted to capture four examples – all of the typical form. As much a surprise was a Flame Wainscot *Mythimna flammea* (Curtis) at the sheet, rarely known away from the Broads and the fens of Cambridgeshire. A Barred Hook-tip *Watsonalla cultraria* (Fabr.) also came to light as well as a good selection of moorland/heathland tortrix moths such as *Ancylis uncella* (D.& S.), *A. unguicella* (L.), *Pseudococcyx turionella* L., *P. posticana* (Zett.), *Epinotia rubiginosana* (H.-S.) and *Acleris rufana* (D.& S.). In spite of being known to a select, though evidently fairly wide, circle of entomologists, it would appear that the existence of this locality has never before made it in to print?

There do not appear to be any other records of this species away from north-west Britain.

I am most grateful to Mark Telfer at the Biological Records Centre, ITE Monks Wood, to Gerry Haggett, Bernard Skinner and Colin Plant for helpful information on the Norfolk records of this species.— JON CLIFTON, Kestrel Cottage, Station Road, Hindolveston, Norfolk NR20 5DE.

The Nine-spotted *Amata phegea* (L.) (Lep.: Ctenuchidae) in Essex

Mr Peter Smith recently passed to me a photograph taken in the Clacton-on-Sea area of an adult moth, apparently *Amata phegea*, sitting on a cluster of developing blackberries. The image was taken on 24 July 2000 by Mr R. Goodson. Mr Goodson at first thought the insect was a butterfly, but fellow amateur photographer Mr R. Cowling recognised it as being a moth and sought confirmation with Mr E. Sewell, who realised the possible importance and showed the picture to Peter. Peter made some enquiries and acquired the slide, and with his help I was able to interview Mr Goodson and find out a little more of the circumstances, although by now two months had passed. Mr Goodson, who was not at all interested in the record and found the fuss his picture had generated rather a surprise, is retired and noticed the insect during a cycle ride, the purpose of which was to try out his new camera with some shots of the local railway. Having a lens with macro capability allowed Mr Goodson to take a sharp, well-exposed picture of what we assume is most likely to be *Amata phegea*.

The only other British occurrence of *A. phegea* was on the Kent coast between Folkestone and Dover, on 24 June 1872, when one was taken flying in sunshine (Batchelor, 1874. Entom. 7: 88 as *Syntomis phegea* – see also Emmet & Heath 1979. *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 9: 111); that specimen is figured in South (1961. *The Moths of the British Isles*. Warne).

The distribution map given in de Freina & Witt (1987. *Die Bombyces und Sphinges der Westpalaearktis*. Verlag) shows that *A. phegea* is widespread in Europe. Although absent from Iberia, the Mediterranean islands and southern Italy, it extends eastwards from France through the entire Western Palaearctic Region, but

not extending further north than approximately latitude 50 degrees north. Thus, it is absent from Denmark and the entire coastal area of the English Channel, the North Sea and the Baltic. There are, however, two sibling species in Europe, from which *A. phegea* can only be reliably separated by examination of the genitalia. *A. ragazzi* Turati is endemic to central and southern Italy whilst *A. kruegeri* Ragg. affects Italy, former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and eastwards around the north coast of the Black Sea. The larvae of all three species are polyphagous, though *A. phegea* is said to prefer *Rumex*, *Plantago* and *Galium* (de Freina & Witt *op. cit.*) and thus none are particularly likely to be accidentally imported to Britain with produce. Of the three, neither *A. ragazzi* nor *A. kruegeri* seem likely to be good candidates for immigration to Britain. On the basis of all this information, the identification of the Essex specimen as *A. phegea* is considered to be about 99% certain.

I am grateful to Colin Plant for drawing my attention to the existence of the two sibling species of *A. phegea* in Europe, and for providing biological and distributional information on all three.— BRIAN GOODEY, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 4ET. (brian.goodey@dial.pipex.com)

The larval habitat and biology of *Anoplodera livida* (F.) (Col.: Cerambycidae)

It would seem that no proper account has yet appeared in British works of the very unusual life-history, recently discovered, of the above-named smallish longicor — better known to most of us as *Leptura livida*. The natural assumption had been, up to lately, that it develops in dead wood, stumps, boughs or twigs like the vast majority of its family. I therefore reproduce here a brief account freely translated from Klausnitzer and Sander (1981), kindly furnished by Dr R.R. Uthoff-Kaufmann. The beetle's life-history was worked out in detail by B. Burakowski, 1979 *Ann. Zool.* **35**: 25-42.

“Researches have revealed an extraordinary metamorphosis, quite unlike that of any normal *Leptura* species. Egg, larva and pupa are described in detail. The female with her specially adapted ovipositor lays her eggs in meadowland, preferably on bare, sunbaked patches, from July until August; dried earth particles adhere to the egg's chorion; it hatches in ten days' time. Any other information regarding the early stages of this beetle is entirely untrue. The larva is found at a depth of 2-6cm where it feeds on the mycelium of the fungus *Marasmius oreades* Bolt, already established, and perhaps on some humus fragments and the dead roots of the fungus.

Larval growth lasts two years; in the second winter it constructs an earthen cell, 2-5cm underground, and in the following spring weaves a parchment-like pupal case inside the earthen cell. During April and May, the imago emerges from its cocoon into the open after some ten days, towards the end of May or beginning of June. The adult takes a week to attain full coloration and is then found on flowers.”— A.A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.